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T H E  
SECRET HISTORY  
O F A N  
OLD SHOE.

---

INSCRIPTION

*To the most Wondrous-wonderful of all  
wonderful Men and Lovers.*

---

Sejanus, Soul of Rome! his very Name  
Commandeth above Cupid, or his Shafts,  
And, but pronounc'd, is a sufficient Charm  
Against all Rumour; and of absolute Power  
To satisfy for any Lady's Honour.

BEN. JOHNSON.

---

*Animus audax, sui obtegens, in alios criminator; juxta adulatio  
superbia, palam compositus pudor; intus summa adipiscendi  
Libido.*

Tac. Annal. Lib. 4.

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(Price One Shilling.)

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СЕКРЕТНАЯ  
ОДНОГО

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Ben Jonson  
To Sir Henry Herbert  
A Comedy  
of the  
Incomparable  
Mr. Will  
Romeo; and of  
His  
Loyal  
Friends  
and  
Foes  
in  
Italy.  
Written  
by  
Ben Jonson  
and  
Published  
by  
John  
Milton  
for  
the  
Author  
and  
the  
Players  
1600.

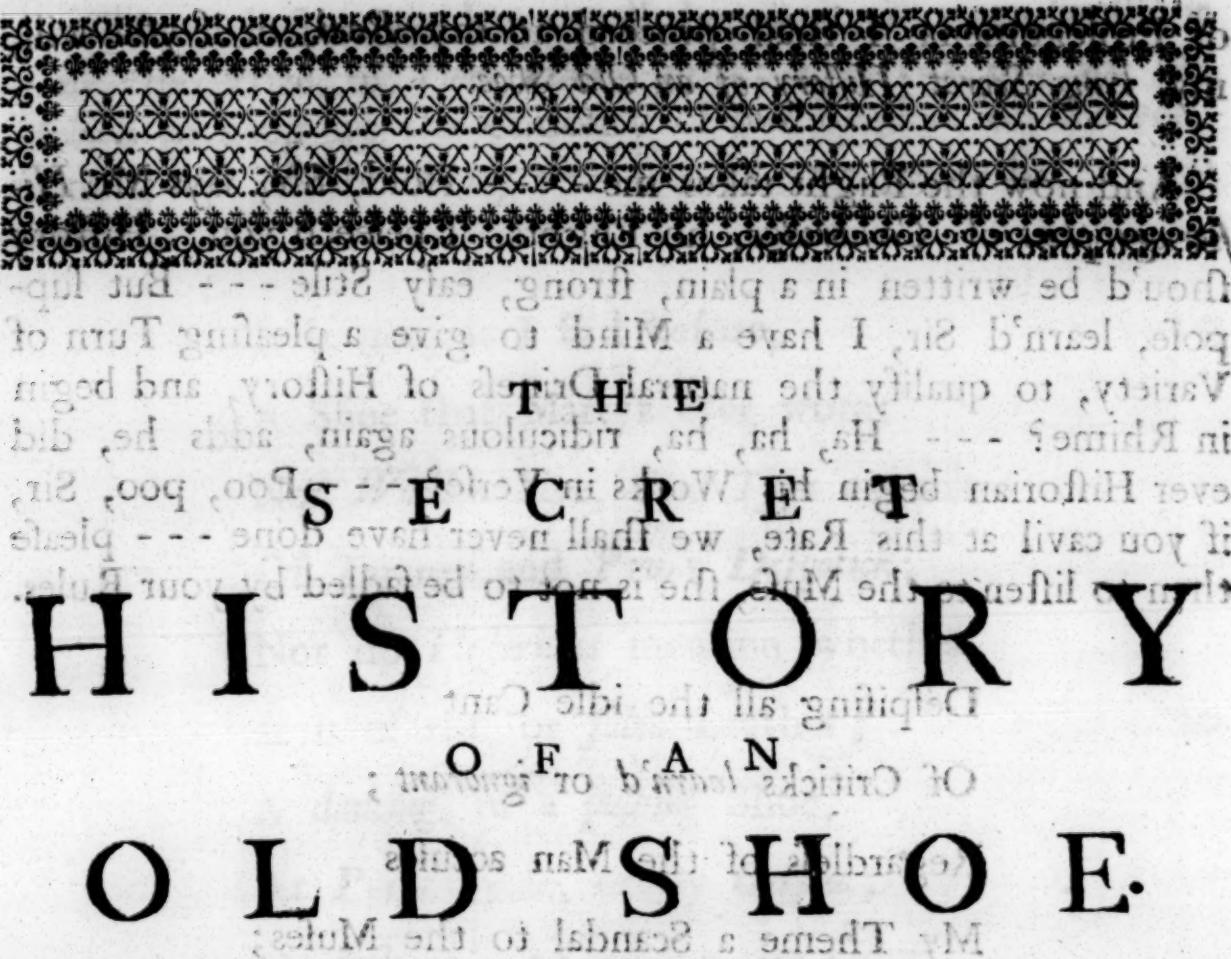
LONDON: Printed by J. D. for the Author and the Players, 1600.

To Sir Henry Herbert

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Price One Shilling



**T H E**  
**S E C R E T**  
**H I S T O R Y**  
**O F A N**  
**O L D S H O E.**

I Am not un-aware of the great Dis-advantage, under which this little History will appear in the World, and of the Objections made to *Secret History* in general: First, because the Materials of which it is composed being necessarily of a *private Nature*, its veracity, which is the real Beauty of History, cannot be depended on, and consequently it exhibits to us nothing but a Heap of *Fabulous Scandal*; and secondly, because, even supposing the Facts undeniably true, supported by the strongest Evidence, it is neither *Christian-like* nor *Man-like* to rake into, and expose the Errors of our Neighbors, and Fellow-creatures.

But what are these Reasons to a Writer, that wants Money? He that eats by his Labours, wou'd starve most *unchristianly*, and *unmanly* if neither *Truth* nor *Lies* were to be told, or propagated; therefore let the Criticks say what they will about *Matter* and *Stile*; nay, let the Ghosts of *Heredotus*, *Livy*, *Salust*, with the whole Posse of defunct Historians rise, and join the Living to persecute me, without farther Preface, Preamble,

B or

or Prolegomena, I shall proceed to my *Real*, or if you will, my *lying Secret History of an Old Shoe*.

And now the Flight takes me ---- Hold, Sir, says Mr. *Historiographus* of Cambridge, no Flights, I beseech you. History shou'd be written in a plain, strong, easy Stile --- But suppose, learn'd Sir, I have a Mind to give a pleasing Turn of Variety, to qualify the natural Driness of History, and begin in Rhime? --- Ha, ha, ha, ridiculous again, adds he, did ever Historian begin his Works in Verse? --- Poo, poo, Sir, if you cavil at this Rate, we shall never have done --- please then to listen to the Muse, she is not to be saddled by your Rules.

Despising all the idle Cant

Of Criticks *learn'd* or *ignorant* ;

Regardless of the Man accuses

My Theme a Scandal to the Muses;

Whether he carps at *Words* or *Lines*,

Or on *mistaken Text* refines,

I sing a Tale, as *odd*, as *true*,

The Story of a good *Old Shoe*.

Tis not a Shoe was ever wore

By *Saint* or *Pilgrim* heretofore ;

Nor Relick fetch'd from *Holy Place*,

Imparting *mere mysterious Grace* ;

Nor Kin at all that we can gues

To Slipper of his *Holiness*.

10

What is it then, cries another superficial, overhasty Gentleman? --- Have Patience, sweet Sir, if you please ; or if the Texture of your Brain is too delicate to digest a twelve Penny Thing, we must refer you to the last Page. You wou'd not sure Be so unreasonable, as to expect we shou'd be complaisant enough to wait on you, or let you into the Catastrophe of our

*of an OLD SHOE.*

7

our History before we have well begun it, or even swell'd it  
it to the Price of *Tom Huck-a-Trift*? - - No, no, we are  
resolv'd to keep up the Curiosity of our Readers till the very  
winding up of the Story - - but Sir - - you trifle - - go  
on Muse.

It is not, as I said before,

SYL<sup>15</sup>

A Shoe that Martyr ever wore;

Nor *Wooden Shoe*, that Type exotick

Of *Tyranny* and *Pow'r Despotick*;

Nor do *Historians* mention whether

It is of *red*, or *sable* Leather;

20

A *dancing*, or a *pushing* Shoe,

At *Paris* made, or by *Carpue*;

Or fashion'd to relieve the *Gout*,

Or wore by *Lord*, or *Lady*, out;

Or grac'd the Foot of neat *Jane Shore*,

25

Or some more clumsy modern Wh-re;

Or dropt by *Crispin* from above

To inspire the Finders with more Love:

All these are Mist'ries too intense

To be explor'd by Vulgar Sense.

30

A pox on these Qrs, says one, that thinks himself a Wit without Doubt. I reckon we shall have Absurdities and Paradoxes in abundance by and by. - - Why does not the Block-head go on with the Thread of his History in Ingelligible Prose, and not detain us with his poetical Digressions, and impertinent Niceties, about the Qualities and Pedigrees of his old Shoe? And here I wou'd fain ask, how he knows it to be an *Old Shoe*, since it is evident, from his own Reasoning, that he never saw it, and moreover confesses, it requires some supernatural aid to explain the foregoing Difficulties?

Is

Is it sufferable I must be thus pester'd at my setting out with such troublesome, illiterate Querists! Do you not perceive, Sir, with all your affected Knowledge, that this seeming Uncertainty of Genealogy, is a beautiful Imitation of various celebrated Authors, who have handled Subjects of this low Nature, and at the same Time introduce the subsequent fine Soliloquy?

But ha! what is't I feel within?  
What strange Emotion am I in.  
Quite from *Abdomen* to the *Peri-*  
*Cranium* beneath the Scalp that's hairy?  
Like *Wizard*, deep in Incantation,  
Or *Sybil*, hard at Divination,  
My Pent intestines rumble sadly;  
My rowling Eye-balls stare as madly;  
My Brain resembles him that dives;  
It troubles now -- Now more revives,  
As Breath retain'd, receiving Air,  
Makes the stun'd Faculties more clear.  
A Flood of sudden Light no flows,  
A strong Enthusiasm glows;  
Behold the Texture of the Brain

35

40

45

Illumin'd by Prophetic Strain;  
Truth, with all penetrating Fires,  
Lights each dark cranny and inspries  
A Mighty Statesman lin'd the Shoe,  
With Stuff imported from Peru,  
And bids me thus the Tale the pursue,

50

What!

of an OLD SHOE. 9

What ! interrupted again! - - - Why, this is the Devil ! what do you mean Mr. *Orator* by asserting there's no such Thing as *Inspiration*, or *inspir'd Writers*? - - - Irreverent Sir, with Submission to your universal Learning, I do affirm, that neither Man, Woman, nor Child gave me this *Item*, and yet I am as confident as your self, that this *Mighty Statesman* alluded to, tho' he is not Workman enough to make a complete nice Shoe, has sufficient skill to *line* one - - - Yes, I say again, he *did line* it, as you will presently perceive to your Confusion and Shame if you had any - - Nay, I will farther aver, that he can *patch* too, as well as *cobble* and *botch*, deny it if you can - - - Tis true, I grant, this does not much redound to his Glory; for after all, *Patching* is no better than *Cobling*, and *Cobling* not a jot preferable to *Botching*, and all of them together are but Signs of a Work ill done. - - But to proceed, - - as how tho'? In Prose, or Verse? - - I am bewitch'd I think - - Poetry will get the better.

There was a Maid (for now again  
We must digress to speak of Men,  
And Women too, as Accessory  
To the Compleating of the Story) 55

Both Witty, Pretty, Young and Fair,  
Of easy shape, and sprightly Air,  
*Sweetissa* nam'd; but soon, no wonder,  
The *Old Temptation* she fell under,  
And learnt, like Mother, th'ancient Knack 60  
Of gently falling on her Back;  
A Custom, which with *Time* began,  
Still lasts, and ceases but with *Man*.

'Twere strange indeed had she remain'd  
Long in the Virgin State unstain'd: 65  
She breaths that fatal Clime to Maids,  
To Widows, Wives, and Husbands *Heads*,

C Where

Where Virtue takes too slender Root,  
 To yield a very lasting Fruit,  
 And is as difficult to rear,  
 As Melons near the frozen Bear.  
 Me thinks I hear a good Country Squire saying here, I  
 hate when People leave one in the Dark. Why had not he  
 told one now, where this where was. Ah Neighbour? -- It's a  
 Sign, Sir, you never was at Court, or otherwise, you must  
 not have a very sagacious Nose, for tho' a Man of more  
 Penetration than your self might be puzzled to point out the  
 direct Place, few Soils being fertil in Virtue now adays, yet  
 Sir, the Air of St. J----'s has so peculiar a *Hollowness* in it  
 above all others, that the Flavour of *Venery* is to be smelt in  
 every Street by the most indifferent Odorist. I hope you conceive  
 me now Sir -- but pray, Sir, trouble us no more with your  
 Ignorance. We don't pretend to furnish you with Expletives  
 upon every Non-Conception, and consequently, when you read  
 that a certain *valuable Consideration* was paid for this same Virtue,  
 you are not to expect a particular Discussion. -- Your Pardon  
 Muse --

This Bawble, or this common Bubble,  
 That gives Mankind such Plague and Trouble;  
 This fleeting Thing, call'd Maiden Head,  
 That in one short-liv'd Minute's fled,  
 Like other Merchandise was sold,

And barter'd for a Statesman's Gold,  
 For not the anxious Care of State,

Sworn Enemy to amorous Heat,

Had Power to quell, so fierce Flame,

What some th'rry Member Name'd

Where

75

80

How,

## *of an O L D S H O E.*

ff

How, Sir! will not what I said just now concerning Particulars satisfy you, but you must insist on knowing the very individual Sum comprised under the general Term of Gold; and not only that, but also, as if you doubted the Statesman's Vigour, want to have forsooth a more minute Description of his skill in *Vaulting*? - - Oh, fie, Sir! these are very unreasonable Demands - - what! put his *Purse* and his *Breeches* to the Scrutiny! - - Weak and Monstrous! - - I wish, Sir, there be no latent Designs against the State couch'd under these invidious Expectations. - - Every Body knows that Money has been very plentiful of late in the City, on the Election of a Chamberlain, and that much more will doubtless be dealt about the Country on the approaching Election of a New Parliament, must I therefore call the Truth of each in Question by making impertinent Queries about the specific Sums severally apply'd? In like Manner, I am as well persuaded that Mr. B... has an Amour with Mrs. H... as tho' I knew the express Number of Times - - However, Sir, I will once more give my self the Trouble to set you right in your Judgment of Things, which I hope will have a better Effect on you than my last - - Why, Sir, had you but only consider'd the Quality of the Person in Question, you wou'd have no Occasion to trouble either your self, or me, with these unnecessary Queries - - You wou'd readily have concluded, that a Lover of his immense Power and Fortune, wou'd scorn to purchase his Pleasures at a vulgar Rate; and this wou'd have naturally led you to make this secondary Reflection, that the Donation, being equivalent to the vast Wealth of the Donor, wou'd in all Probability be more acceptable to her than ten Times the Violence of his Flame. - - No Compliments I beg Sir - - you are heartily welcome, - - let us now attend to the Muse's Description of this great and potent Statesman.

His Character - - He is a Knight,  
That does Things oftner *wrong* than *right*,  
Of consequence, his Wisdom, some  
Infer, takes up no mighty Room.  
His Policy, in all he acts,  
Is to avoid the open Tracks,

85

And

And like the *Ferret*, or the *Mole*,  
 Slily to undermine the Soul,  
 He's stil'd *Corrupter* and *Projector*, 90  
 In fine, all *Titles* - - but *Protector*.  
 Now of *Sweetissa's* Sire a Word --  
 Well, what of *Skurrus*? --- O, Good Lord!  
 O, most abominable Slander!  
 'Tis shrewdly guess'd he was her *Pander*. 95  
 But as the *Tesly* Sir is gone  
 To answer for all Failings done,  
 Be tender how we blast his Shade,  
 Nor rake the Ashes of the Dead,  
 Have Patience, Reader, we draw nigh 100  
 Conclusion of our History ;  
 Another Word concerning Daughter,  
 And then prepare yourself for Laughter.  
 And how do you think she took his Fate?  
 As greedy Fishes do a Bait, 105  
 She view'd the Moment he departed  
 With less Concern than if he'd farted;  
 No Vulgar filial Tears she paid  
 The Ghostly, Graceless, Parent-Shade,  
 Nor even wore a Grief in Shew, 110  
 Which common Form obliges to;  
 For Miss was too politely bred  
 To cry her Eyes out for the Dead,

And

*of an OLD SHOE.*

13

And more regarding her dear *Beauty*  
Than either *Nature*, or her *Duty*,  
Was in high Extasy of Soul,  
That she could Wh--e without Controul,  
And make this prove Occasion lucky  
To draw more largely on her Ducky.

Come now we shall begin to mend  
Our Peace, to reach our journey's End ;  
You see I keep my Word a main,  
And as you read, I still explain.

120

Ha, ha, ha, I swear this poor Rogue of a Poet makes me laugh to hear him prate thus of keeping his Word - - The Word of a Poet! Ha, ha, ha, I never knew that Poets regarded their Words - - And where the Devil's the Explanation he talks of? 'Tis as abstruse to me as a System of the *Black Art*, wrote a hundred Years hence.

Dear Sir! sweet Sir! for really Sir, you appear to me, by your Remarks, to be what the Ladies call a *very pretty Fellow*. I beseech you, Sir, none of your Play-House Jokes; none of your insipid Pleasantries upon my Brothers of the Quill - - If you would be told what I mean by Explanation; learn, Sir, that I never slabber over a Story at once, but chuse to steal upon the Understanding (your's wife Sir excepted) and unravel the Mystery by Degrees, as one brought out of a Dungeon into the open Day; for should the Truth blaze out too suddenly, my Dear, such Comprehensions as yours would be struck blind with a Redundancy of Light; and therefore you see, Sir, that what you deem abstruse, is but already too dazzling for your weak Capacity - - But the Messenger waits.

Miss, in this Transport of Delight,  
Dispatches *Tom* to th'am'rous *Knight*  
With *Billet doux* to intimate  
The welcome News of Father's Fate.

125

D

Another

Another Messenger she sends  
For *Sappho*, chief of Female Friends;  
That *Sappho* who has more of Pride  
And Wit, than all her Sex beside,  
With such a Share of Leudnes too,  
She likewise here does *all* outdo.  
E'er well she'd Time to order *Vau-n*  
To hem some Muslin, Cambric, Lawn,  
And quit the Room to do a Thing,  
With which there is no dallying,  
Being a very urgent Matter,  
Namely to *sh-e*, or scatter Water;  
(For know, ye Beaux, so modest Miss,  
She cannot either *sh-*, or *piss*  
With any tolerable Grace  
Before another Woman's Face,  
Which surely you will Virtue call,  
Or I shall think there's none at all;  
Yet Authors say, she's not too shy  
To do 'em both, when Men are by.)  
The *Knight* and *Sappho*, in gay Wood,  
Enter her Chamber, laughing loud,  
When *Sappho*, with her usual Wit,  
Accosts *Sweetissa*. This is it:  
Is *Skirrus* gone, at last, quoth she,  
To what Folks call Eternity,

To

C

To put his Claim in for Salvation,

Or be rejected with Damnation?

155

There to be try'd for past Offences,

And damn'd for trifling Negligences,

Eternally, or dub'd a Saint

For Works as insignificant?

*O Tempori! O Mores!* says the good Parson of our Parish --- O the virtuous Effects of Free-thinking! we make a Jest of the most sacred Things, and delight to shew our Wit in Prophanation. We presume to measure the Ways of Omnipotency with our own weak, and shallow Understandings; and even the fair Part of the Creation venture now a-days to unfold the Mysteries of Religion, and argue on the most knotty Points of Divinity. What will be the End of all this Depravity! We have already thought away Christianity; the next Latitude we take, will be to make free with the Deity! -- Eternity of Torment, say they.

But reverend Sir, we must beg your Excuse -- we have neither Time nor Room to enter into a Disquisition of a Subject of this copious Nature. Therefore Muse, give us the Rest of Sappho's Speech.

Has the old nick-nam'd Tunbridge Duke,

His harmless Baudy House forsook,

And left the Knight and you to revel

At large, and play the very Devil?

In sweet Licentiousness to wh-re?

Quoth Miss, you're welcome -- He's no more.

Already is his Soul beyond

The Regions of the Stygian Pond;

Behold him clad in Clay an Hour --

Then turning to the Tool of Power,

With

With graceful Bending of the Knee, 170

And looking most bewitchingly;

That is, with Eyes in Flow of Soul,

With roguish Leer, and languid Roul;

All liquify'd in Tenderness,

Resembling melting Amber-Grease, 175

She minds him of a Promise made,

At Death of Skirrus to be paid,

And drops a seasonable Hint,

In Language that would soften Flint,

Relating to a Boy at\* School, \*Westminster. 180

Who, if like Father, is no Fool.

Zounds Sir! What unintelligible Stuff is this! what Promise? what tender Language? what Boy? what Father? - Be more explicit, or the Devil shall hear any further for me.

No Emotion! no Passion, pray Sir! - we will presently satisfy your Demand; but do you know, Sir, that it requires a more masterly Genius than I can boast of, to do it with any tolerable Spirit in Poetry, therefore please to accept of a plain Historical Account of it.

In the Reign of *Gearius Magnus*, after our doughty Knight had rifled the hidden Charm, the Ten Thousand Pound Flower of *Sweetissa*, her fine Shape underwent no strange Alteration. She lac'd strait; wore the stiff Busk; a large Hoop; yet was not able to conceal the Elbowings and Struggles of imprison'd Nature. It grew too perceptible to the World; therefore she retired into the Country, where she soon became the Mother of the Boy just mention'd.

She had Recourse, on this Occasion to the general Artifice of the Sex, who seldom fail to improve such Circumstances as these to their Advantage. She laid little or no Stress on her Repu-

Reputation -- She was too wiser & All center'd in her Compas-  
sion and Affection for the innocent Babe. She stroak'd, she  
kiss'd, she bless'd the little rising Statesman. She employ'd in  
his Behalf the whole Powers of maternal Eloquence. With  
wonderful Strength of Reasoning and Art, she urg'd the  
Tyranny of Custom, which cruelly deprives natural Children  
of Kindred, and excludes them from paternal Inheritances.  
Unhappy Infants, she cry'd, that suffer for others Faults! and  
then she wept.

What Heart could resist these tender Remonstrances? The  
Knight immediately made her a solemn Promise to make her  
Mistress of fifty thousand Pounds for the effectual Support of  
her Grandeur, and twenty thousand Pounds for the Education  
of the Boy, both to be punctually paid on the Demise of  
*Skirrus.*

Now, Sir, I presume you are easy, and my Muse and I  
may proceed peaceably together, and display the additional  
Reason she gives for the immediate Performance of this Pro-  
mise -- for says she,

If I am left in rich Condition  
Above a venal, bought, Fruition,  
Folks will ne'er think for sordid Fee  
I suffer'd the Iniquity,  
And 'twill be less suspected still  
I ever did it for *Good Will*  
Therefore I draw my Bill, dear Knight!

185

Which I expect you'll pay at Sight.  
Altho' a Statesman makes as little  
Of Promises, as of his Spittle,

190

And never uses Memory,  
But when it suits his Policy;  
Nor cares for giving Independance  
To Creatures under bare Dependance,

195

In this Affair, it must be said, - She - - She  
 Our Hero had retentive Head,  
 And kept his Honour and his Word,  
 In other Things not worth a T-d,  
 And generous put it out of's Power      200  
 To turn her off, without a Dower.

Quoth He, extremely pleas'd to find  
 Her Looks so more than usual kind,  
 Bright Jewel ! Earthly Paragon,  
 What I have said, I'll do anon,      205

Nay make two Payments 'stead of one:  
 Thou shalt have any thing Sweet Honey;  
 First take my P--- and then the Money.

But certain Authors deviate

Something from what we here relate,      210  
 And mention not a Word about  
 The Politician's Lugging out.

Others again, who seem to be  
 Read better in the Mistery,

Affirm, that *Sappho*, ever willing      215  
 To forward the good Sport of Billing,  
 Quitted the Room, and then they made  
 The two-back'd Beast upon the Bed.

So, Mr. *Delicate*, you turn up your Nose strangely at these  
*gross Expressions*, as you in a sneering Manner call them - - But  
 I must tell you, Sir, these are favorite Terms with all your  
 great Wits (tho' I wou'd not have you infer from thence that  
 I am one) - - please to consult your *Hudibrass*, the celebrated  
 Captain *Gulliver*, with many others, and you will find I am  
 more

more than justify'd - - and pray, Sir, did you never read the great *Shakespear*? Or did you never see the Tragedy of *Othello*, where you will find that the *Beast* with *two Bucks* is not too *gross* for the Audience, tho' spoke several Times in a Season? - - No reply, Sir, - - the Money is just going to be paid - - -

Take which Account you will, no Matter,

Whether he was, or was not at her,

220

Not *Death and Taxes* are more sure,

Nor *Dial to the Sun* is truer,

Than that he told the *foresaid Sum*

Upon the *Convex* of her *Bum*;

For he had sworn he ne'er wou'd pay

225

The Species any other Way,

Which Miss, to save her Lover's Oath,

Comply'd with, tho' exceeding Loth,

This done, he bid the Fair one rise,

Then laid her down these Maxims wise,

230

To shew the vast profundity

His Head contain'd of Policy.

No more Specimens of his Politics I beg Sir - - - we have had too much of them already - - - Book lye there - - -

Nay, prithee, Reader hang no Arse,

But patiently go thro' the Farce,

Not like a jaded running Horse,

235

Give out so near the End o'th' Course;

We soon shall put thee out of Pain;

And then for the *Old Shoe* again.

Quoth



*of an OLD SHOE.*

21

Therefore 'tis highly necessary      265  
In this Donation to be wary,

And not to give the World to know,  
That you, to me, this Fortune owe.

He said; and then began to teem  
Forth from his Brain the wond'rous Skeme ;      270  
The Stratagem, which was to blind  
The prying Eyes of all Mankind.

It comes - yet scarce can I express it,  
Nor cou'd the wisest Mortal guess it.

He first draws up smart Paragraph,      275  
(O, he Sirs! is't not rude to laugh?)

In *Daily Post* to be recorded,  
*Verbatim*, as himself had worded,  
Importing *Skirrus*, tho' as poor  
As Gamester broke, or cast off Who-re,      280  
Dy'd worth full Fifty-thousand Pound,  
With large Estates -- not Under-ground ;  
But visible -- tho' Lord knows where;  
Some hint as if they were in Air.

To make this News more likely still,      285  
He pens a very formal Will,  
Containing *Items*, *Legacies*,  
Bequeath'd to certain He's and She's,  
And makes it pass for *Skirrus*'s.

But lo! the *Master-piece* of all!      290  
Which I *consummate Cunning* call;

F

Mark

Mark and remark, consider, weigh,  
And turn th'Invention ev'ry Way,  
'Tis Wonderful! - - Not *Machiavel*,  
Nor all the Fiends and Devils in Hell,  
Nor he, that arch-advent'rous Wight,  
That nick'd *Old Nick* by Candle-light,  
Cou'd form a better! - - O Amasing!  
When shall my Tongue have finish'd praising!

295

The Knight pack'd Jewels and the Cash

300

Together up, like so much Trash,  
Then pent them up in *Hugger-mugger*,  
In private Hole to lye the Snugger,  
And fix'd next Day for the Discov'ry,  
As well for Passing the Recov'ry,

305

Which, as a Fetch in Politics,  
Was to be made 'fore Domesticks,  
In Order that they might apprise  
The World, and vouch to all these Lies.

The Hour now come, and Servants call'd,

310

The Cavity is over-hall'd,  
When lo! the Treasure shews to View,  
Entrench'd within the *good Old Shoe*,  
Of which we have been all this while  
Discoursing - - If it makes you smile,

315

We're paid sufficient for our Toil.

*F I N I S.*

Pag. 15, lin. 7. instead of *O Tempori!* read *O Tempora!*



